Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
Capital, Sukhumi; area, 3,300, population, 330,000

The Abkhaz Autonomous SSR or Abkhasia (Russian *Abkhaziya*) occupies the extreme northwestern portion of the Georgian SSR, on the southwestern slope of the Greater Caucasus, oriented toward the Black Sea. Nearly the entire population, including, in addition to the basic Abkhaz national group, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, is established in a narrow littoral zone between the town of Gagra and the Ingur (or Enguri) River, which forms the southeastern border of the republic. The mountain slopes are largely forested. The humid subtropical climate of the lowland makes possible the cultivation of such important crops as citrus fruits (tangerines, lemons, oranges, and grapefruit), tea, tung-wood, geranium, and other subtropical plants. The principal staple crops are corn and a high-quality tobacco, which is partly exported abroad and makes the Abkhaz Autonomous SSR one of the major tobacco-growing areas of the USSR. Lumbering is important in the forested area, and there is a large paper mill on the Ingur River. Other important power resources are the excellent coking coal of Tkvarcheli and the many mountain streams which furnish hydroelectric energy. The industry consists chiefly of sawmilling, woodworking, wine making, tobacco processing, and fruit canning and its centers are the capital, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Ochamchire, and Gagra. The Black Sea littoral is a popular climatic resort area, having numerous tourist resorts and sanatoria. The principal transportation routes are the Black Sea shore railroad, which was completed during the Second World War, and the Sukhumi military road, which leads across the Greater Caucasus at Klukhori Pass and has its terminus at Sukhumi, on the Black Sea coast.

Sukhumi, which was formerly called Sukhum, is one of the most important subtropical health resorts of the USSR. It is the center of the tobacco-growing area and has tobacco factories, distilleries, metalworks, and food-processing plants. There are tropical botanical gardens and a research institute devoted to subtropical agriculture. Near by on the Gumista River is a hydroelectric station completed after the Second World War.

Gali is an agricultural processing center in a tea and citrus-fruit district.

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's, has overtaken the older